

That sacrifice came very clear to me and Americans on Flight 93, when people, passengers, people going to work or wherever they were going to, were on cell phones and realized America was under attack and realized the plane they were on was going to be used as a weapon. And they told their loved ones they loved them, said a prayer, and sacrificed their lives so others could live.

To me, that defines the American spirit and what is possible, in all kinds of ways, across the country. The evil ones hit us, but this great Nation is not going to allow the evil ones to have its day. This great Nation will rise up, with its goodness and

kindness and compassion, and show the world not only our strength, not only our determination, but show the world we understand the true meaning of love.

I want to thank you all for coming tonight. It is my honor—it is my incredible honor to be the President of the greatest nation on the face of the Earth. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:23 p.m. at the U.S. Cellular Center. In his remarks, he referred to Dan Gable, former head coach, men's wrestling, University of Iowa; and Cael Sanderson, wrestler, Iowa State University.

## Statement on the Death of Byron R. White *April 15, 2002*

Laura and I are saddened by the news of the passing of Justice Byron White. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family

and friends. Justice White was a distinguished jurist who served his country with honor and dedication. He will be missed.

## Remarks on the Proposed Crime Victims' Rights Amendment to the Constitution *April 16, 2002*

Well, John, thank you very much for inviting me to this beautiful room, and thank you all for coming today.

Justice is one of the defining commitments of America. In our war against terror, I constantly remind our fellow citizens: We seek justice, not revenge. We seek justice for victims. We seek justice for their families. And for justice to prevail in our struggle for freedom, we must rout out terrorist threats wherever they exist. And that's exactly what this country is going to do. And while the war goes on and while our fight for freedom continues, we will continue to work for justice at home, in-

cluding justice for the victims of violent crime.

I appreciate John Ashcroft's leadership, his stand on principle, and his wise counsel during my time as the President. I appreciate so very much Senator Feinstein and Senator Kyl carrying this cause that I'm here to support. I want to thank the chairman, and I want to thank the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee for coming as well, Senator Leahy and Senator Hatch. I want to thank all the Members from the United States Congress for being here, Congressmen Barrett and Chabot and Wicker.

I too want to thank John Walsh. I appreciate not only you standing up for victims; I appreciate you putting the pictures of the Al Qaida killers on the TV screen to help America remain alert, to help this country understand that we're still in danger from attack. I want to thank you for being a good American, and I want to thank you for helping the cause.

I want to welcome the leaders of victim rights groups from all around the country. I particularly want to thank and congratulate those who are award winners today.

As John mentioned, in the year 2000, Americans were victims of millions of crimes. Behind each of these numbers is a terrible trauma, a story of suffering, and a story of lost security. Yet, the needs of victims are often an afterthought in our criminal justice system. It's not just; it's not fair; and it must change. As we protect the rights of criminals, we must take equal care to protect the rights of the victims.

Many of the victims of crime have gotten a crash course in the complications and frustrations of our criminal justice system. One victim put it this way: "They explained the defendant's constitutional right to the nth degree. They couldn't do this, and they couldn't do that, because of his constitutional rights. And I wondered what mine were. And they told me, I hadn't got any." The guy sounded like he came from Texas. [Laughter]

But too often, our system fails to inform victims about proceedings involving bail and pleas and sentencing and even about the trials themselves. Too often, the process fails to take the safety of victims into account when deciding whether to release dangerous offenders. Too often, the financial losses of victims are ignored. And too often, victims are not allowed to address the court at sentencing and explain their suffering or even to be present in the courtroom where their victimizers are being tried.

When our criminal justice systems treats victims as irrelevant bystanders, they are

victimized for a second time. And because Americans are justifiably proud of our system and expect it to treat us fairly, the second violation of our rights can be traumatic. "It's like a huge slap," said one victim, "because you think the system will protect you. It's maddening and frightening."

Thirty years ago, a grassroots movement began to stand up for the rights of victims. It resulted in domestic violence shelters, support groups for families of homicide victims, rape crisis centers. They exist in cities and neighborhoods all across America, because Americans care about their neighbors in need. One good example is in John's home State of Missouri. It's called Aids—Aid for Victims of Crime, Inc., in which volunteers provide counseling and court advocacy and other essential services to the victims of crime.

Victims' rights groups are active every single day. There isn't a day that goes by that they're not involved in somebody's life, and they're especially important during times of disaster and crisis. You know, when the bomber hit Oklahoma City, victims' rights groups were on the scene immediately thereafter to help. And the same happened after 9/11 in New York, in Washington, Pennsylvania. Victims' rights groups were there. Hundreds of counselors and chaplains and social workers, victims' service providers helped their fellow Americans deal with the unspeakable pain and suffering caused by the terrorist murders.

The Attorney General will shortly present awards to outstanding individuals and groups for their work on behalf of victims. I had the honor of meeting the winners, and I want to congratulate them publicly for loving your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. You've chosen to live out the words of Saint Paul: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." And our Nation struggles—as our Nation struggles to overcome the evil of September the 11th, your lives, the example

you set, stand out as models of compassion and integrity.

The victims' rights movement has touched the conscience of this country, and our criminal justice system has begun to respond, treating victims with greater respect. The States as well as the Federal Government have passed legal protections for victims. However, those laws are insufficient to fully recognize the rights of crime victims.

Victims of violent crime have important rights that deserve protection in our Constitution. And so today I announce my support for the bipartisan crime victims' rights amendment to the Constitution of the United States. As I mentioned, this amendment is sponsored by Senator Feinstein of California, Senator Kyl of Arizona—one a Democrat, one a Republican, both great Americans.

This amendment makes some basic pledges to Americans. Victims of violent crime deserve the right to be notified of public proceedings involving the crime. They deserve to be heard at public proceedings regarding the criminal's sentence

or potential release. They deserve to have their safety considered. They deserve consideration of their claims of restitution. We must guarantee these rights for all the victims of violent crime in America.

The Feinstein-Kyl amendment was written with care and strikes a proper balance. Our legal system properly protects the rights of the accused in the Constitution, but it does not provide similar protection for the rights of victims, and that must change.

The protection of victims' rights is one of those rare instances when amending the Constitution is the right thing to do. And the Feinstein-Kyl crime victims' rights amendment is the right way to do it.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Great Hall at the Robert F. Kennedy Department of Justice Building. In his remarks, he referred to John Walsh, host of the television series "America's Most Wanted." He also referred to S.J. Res. 35, the proposed amendment to the Constitution.

## Remarks to the Leaders of the Fiscal Responsibility Coalition *April 16, 2002*

Well, thank you all very much. I appreciate you coming and giving me a chance to discuss the budget of our country.

First, I want to thank Ted Fowler and Grady Rosier for leading this noble effort to make sure that Congress gets the message that fiscal sanity and discipline is important as we fight our war against terror. I want to thank the members of my administration who are here, the Deputy Director of the OMB; I don't know where "The Blade" is, but—[laughter]—he's traveling. But I want to thank you all very much for making up the Fiscal Responsibility Coalition.

Now, last night was not only the night people were supposed to file their taxes, but Congress was supposed to file its budget. The House has, and the Senate hasn't acted yet. But I want you to know that we fulfilled our responsibility.

And I want to talk about budgeting in the face of the war against terror and budgeting in the face of a slowdown in our economy. It's an important issue because sound budgeting is going to determine whether or not—and sound appropriating is going to determine whether or not people are going to be able to find work.